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The Fitz Center for Leadership in Community Community Leader

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FITZ CENTER RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR NEIGHBORHOOD WORK

by Cameron Fullam

The University of Dayton was honored in May by a national organization as an “unsung hero” for its work in building and strengthening Dayton neighborhoods. Neighborhoods USA (NUSA) chose the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community as one of its NUSA Notables. The nonprofit NUSA describes NUSA Notables as “unsung heroes.” While neighborhood leadership and involvement is not their primary function, they make a “significant and positive impact on neighborhoods and neighborhood people.”

“Community building is hard work and often thankless,” said Dick Ferguson, Fitz Center executive director. “It requires a shared vision and leadership that understands how to facilitate finding this vision. The University of Dayton is a private, Catholic university with an extraordinary tradition of such community leadership. The Fitz Center is honored to work for a better Dayton and grateful for this recognition.”

Judy Martinson, city of Dayton citizen participation manager and NUSA vice president, wrote in her nomination letter, “The nature of the leadership challenges in the Dayton community requires adaptive learning and leadership across professional and community sectors. The University of Dayton has established a reputation as an effective community partner, especially with urban Dayton, on difficult community challenges. The University of Dayton adds value with the Fitz Center, which brokers and leads ongoing community building partnerships.”

Created in 1975 to share information and experiences for building stronger communities, NUSA now continues to encourage networking and information-sharing to facilitate the development of partnerships between neighborhood organizations, government and the private sector. Each year, NUSA recognizes the commitment of neighborhoods and neighborhood-friendly individuals or enterprises. 



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Above: Students, staff and faculty play equal leadership roles at the Rivers Institute. The Steering Committee listens to College of Arts and Sciences Associate Dean Don Pair at a recent meeting.

Inset: Leslie King began her work as coordinator of the Rivers Institute on July 1.

A RIVERS INSTITUTE TEEMING WITH LIFE

by Tracey Horan

The Rivers Institute, like our Great Miami River, was teeming with life this spring. One example was the second annual River Summit, a result of ongoing collaboration among the University of Dayton Office of the President, the Rivers Institute and the Miami Conservancy District. The River Summit, a regional conversation about utilizing our rivers as economic assets and overall riverfront development, attracted an animated group of community, business and organization leaders, and river enthusiasts.

Those in attendance were welcomed by University of Dayton President Daniel J. Curran, who spoke of the importance of the University's connection with the Great Miami as part of the larger Dayton community. Rivers Institute coordinator Emily Klein gave remarks about the Rivers Institute and River Stewards program and highlighted the potentially profound impact of combining recreation and connections to nature in an urban setting. Dusty Hall of the Miami Conservancy District spoke about "Ohio's Great Corridor" and highlighted progress made since last year's summit in economic development, recreation, open-space preservation and farmland preservation. A whirlwind of talk about exciting progress ensued as those from five cities along the Great Miami River shared current riverfront development news, including revitalized historic buildings, progress on riverfront public spaces, ongoing efforts to link and boost recreation, and opportunities to preserve natural areas and farmland in the river corridor.

Overall, the 2009 River Summit, as exhibited by a 50 percent increase in attendance from last year, was a booming success. The summit was a telling

Leslie King named coordinator

by Emily Klein




Because the mission of the Rivers Institute is unique — building community by reuniting Dayton and its rivers — it is only fitting that an individual with a unique background and qualifications would be chosen as the new Rivers Institute coordinator. Leslie King is just such an individual. Her extensive outdoor experiences combined with a passion for environmental education, community service and out-of-the-classroom experiences with students led Leslie to apply for the position. Her connections with the outdoors range from canoeing the Canadian Boundary Waters in high school to leading university students in a hike across Costa Rica as lead instructor for an outdoor education abroad program.

With an academic background in environmental protection, Leslie saw the position as an opportunity to combine her passion for working with students, experiential learning and the great outdoors with her educational training. "The experiential learning aspect of the position was my first interest, specifically working with college-age students in this setting," she said. "The more I learned about the position, the more excited I got about the community engagement aspect. The Rivers Institute is unique because it doesn't limit itself to one field. It involves a wide spectrum of ways to get involved in the community around the river."

As a Dayton native returning home after world travels, Leslie also mentioned, "I'm excited to be in a situation where I can give back, be part of an active group in the community in an environmental, service-oriented way. I am excited to kayak down a river I grew up around my whole life and never kayaked on." The Rivers Institute certainly shares Leslie's excitement for what she will bring to the Rivers Institute and wishes to welcome her as the newest member of the Fitz Center staff.

manifestation of growing excitement about river corridor development throughout the Great Miami Watershed.

River Stewards have been busy too. The “Stews,” in conjunction with UD’s Collegiate Middle Level Association, coordinated an after-school River Day for junior high students at Mary Queen of Peace Catholic School, where students participated in interactive events based on aspects of the river. River Stewards also orchestrated an Urban River Tour as a part of Stander Symposium. Stewards led UD students down the Mad River and discussed with participants the history of Dayton’s rivers and other aspects of the Great Miami Watershed. The Rivers Institute has also been busy scouting out the new cohort of River Stewards and has invited 17 first-year students from 14 different majors into the program: Paul Azzi, international business and marketing; Gretchen Berkemeier, mechanical engineering; Jennifer Biette, visual communication design and communications; Kristen Crum, mechanical engineering; Molly Daniels; international studies and human rights studies; Kristen Diddle, chemical engineering; A.J. Ferguson, mechanical engineering; Alex Galluzzo, undecided business; Tom Hanson, undecided business; McLean Johnson, prelaw; Natalie Kokish, intervention specialist; Sara McCrate, biology; Laura Mustee, undecided business, biology minor; Bethany Renner, early child education; Patrick Rowe, undecided; Ann Wedell, chemical engineering; and Kelly Weisenborn, marketing. They will begin their “river journeys” with an orientation trip in August. 


UD COMMUNITY DISCUSSES GOING GREEN

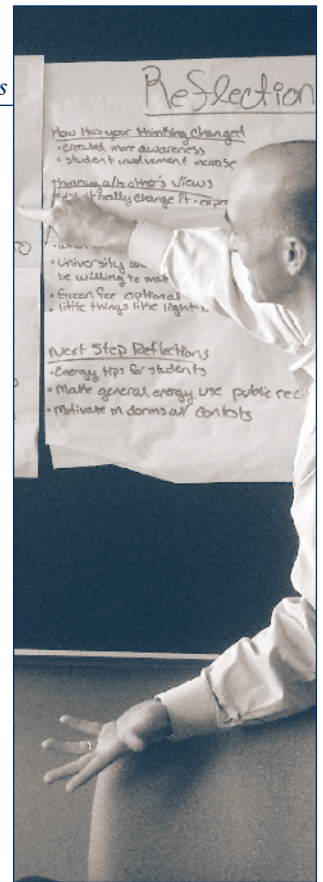
by Lindsey Bungenstock and Alex Orlowski

More than 600 University of Dayton students, faculty and staff came together during the fourth annual Stander Symposium Issue Forum to take on the topic of campus energy use and sustainability. UD spends nearly \$10 million per year on energy costs and, because it does not have viable sources of energy besides Vectren for natural gas and Dayton Power & Light for electricity, the only way UD can reduce its carbon footprint is through reducing energy use.

While many initiatives are already in place to reduce energy consumption at UD (such as energy-efficient windows and light bulbs), there is little more UD can do at an institutional level without significant financial investment in major projects such as a green residence hall or an alternative energy source. Other options include implementing incentives or policies to encourage individual behavioral modifications to reduce energy use. This year’s forum participants deliberated on three organizing questions: Is energy use at UD an issue to which we should devote more time and resources? If so, how can UD use its energy more efficiently? How can our energy conservation efforts be funded and sustained?

Because the topic of energy use is so timely, attendance at the forum was at capacity. For the first time ever, some individuals who did not preregister to participate had to be turned away due to lack of space. Previous forum topics focused on the tensions of promoting higher levels of academic excellence at UD, social networking websites and immigration policy.

A team of undergraduate students and professors spearheaded the project, and a full report of the forum results will be available in the fall. The results will be vital as UD continues to move forward in its sustainability and conservation efforts. 



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Community Leader



SERVICE-LEARNING CENTER PROPOSED


by Joanne Troha

In the 2008-09 academic year, more than 260 UD students participated in the Fitz Center's special program and course-related service-learning opportunities. That number increases each year as does the number of students engaged in service learning through many campus centers and departments.

The University's commitment to service and developing community leaders is valued locally and recognized nationally. It sets us apart from many other universities and truly demonstrates our mission. Yet despite this reputation and numbers of students and faculty engaged in community service and service learning, people new to UD are often surprised to learn this is done without a centralized office of service learning. Missing are the benefits of centralized support that might include coordination, faculty and partner development, assessment, and communication. While UD's decentralized approach has its own benefits, new emphases at UD and nationally led to a growing awareness that we could be much more effective and efficient.

In February 2008, Kelly Bohrer (Center for Social Concern) and Joanne Troha (Fitz Center for Leadership in Community) convened representatives of UD offices promoting service learning. The discussion confirmed several short-term and long-term issues, plus commitment to tackle them. To properly address strategic planning for service learning, the group applied for and received funding from the provost and Faculty Development Committee with matching support from deans. A six-month planning venture began with a retreat at Bergamo May 21-22, 2008, with 55 participants from campus and community. A steering committee and four teams continued developing the strategy over summer and fall, guided by Dave Ramey of Strategic Leadership Associates. In December participants of the initial retreat commented on the draft strategy. Kelly Bohrer, Nick Cardilino, Dick Ferguson, Joanne Troha and Associate Dean Don Pair made revisions accordingly, finishing the final report.

At the core of the proposed strategy is a professionally staffed office that will complement service-learning centers already functioning around campus, offering support in the areas of curriculum planning, faculty development, assessment and tracking, logistics, training, public relations, and ties to service-learning networks. The proposal outlines a timetable and budget and has been submitted for formal consideration by the University administration.

The University now has a blueprint for strengthening service learning, as well as a number of spin-off, short-term steps that have already been enacted this year (including two faculty exchange series workshops on service learning, a University-wide brochure listing service-learning paths at UD, a service-learning fair to bring faculty and community partners together, and an updated list of potential project requests). 



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CHOOSING THE UNCOMFORTABLE

by Jana Strom

A wise man I worked with during my post-graduate service at Nazareth Farm once said, "When faced with a choice, I pray I will never settle for the comfortable situation." He was not swearing off air conditioning or cushy couches. Rather, he hoped that he would always possess the courage to act with a willingness to be uncomfortable: meet new people, take a stand, live simply, love deeply.

Each year 20 students invite discomfort into their lives by challenging themselves to see the world through others' eyes. Now in its seventh year, Semester of Service has offered more than 140 students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the city of Dayton's social service sector. I have had the privilege of accompanying 91 of these students on their journey to better understand themselves and the justice issues that impact our community. Though students join Semester of Service understanding that the community work is the most important component of their experience, I believe the real purpose of the program is to encourage thoughtful reflection about one's actions. Reflection is what binds the service with scholarship enabling them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

The skill of reflection is one that will serve students well beyond graduation. I have reaffirmed this point in my own life during the past few months. By the time this newsletter is published, I will be on a new adventure in Boston, pursuing a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at Massachusetts General Hospital's Institute of Health Professions. Moving away from great friends and colleagues is completely uncomfortable for me; however, I have found peace in the companionship of others in my life that have chosen to live and grow amidst their own discomfort: a friend doing Peace Corps in Africa, young families working hard to make ends meet, another friend choosing to continue living after the death of a dear friend. If the students I have worked with take anything away from our interactions, I hope it is a willingness to stretch their comfort zones, reflect upon their actions and not compare one person's discomfort to another's. We are each so different. A call to live uncomfortably is a deeply personal challenge. It can be an act of prayer or a small attempt at solidarity. However it may be manifested in your life, I hope you too find solace in the fact that we are making the journey together.

Summer 2009 Semester of Service Students are rising junior Elizabeth Scott and rising seniors Julie Anton, Cindy Boyce, Colleen Fitzsimons, Elizabeth Geiger, Kelly Karp, Katie Large, Kylee Looser, Megan McPheron, Abbey Rymarczyk and Elizabeth Wells. 



Semester of Service has offered more than 140 students the opportunity to immerse themselves in Dayton's social service sector.





Above: Dean Lovelace organized UD's first CityLinks Conference in 1985. He continued to organize this event until this year.

Below: Jana Strom (left) with Semester of Service participants. She has recently accepted a position to pursue doctoral studies in physical therapy at the Institute of Health Professions of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

FITZ CENTER LOSING TWO LEADERS

by Ed Zamierowski, S.M.

Dean Lovelace came to UD in 1984 experienced with Dayton's Priority Board system. Living in Inner West Dayton, Dean supported the work of Mattie Davis with the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition and helped develop the Edgemont Solar Garden, which Mattie often reminded us "was more than a garden." Dean became deeply involved in training neighborhood leaders in skills needed to form the first Neighborhood Development Corporations in Dayton. UD's first CityLinks Conference took place in 1985, and Dean continued to organize this event until this year.


He was elected to the Dayton City Commission in 1993 and is serving his fifth term. He has been instrumental in enabling low income residents to access Earned Income Tax Credits. In 1996, he began the Community Reinvestment Institute to educate citizens in financial literacy and foreclosure prevention.

In 2005, Dean became the first director of the Dayton Civic Scholars. He recruited community leaders to serve as guest speakers at meetings and mentored students. Besides team-teaching sociology classes with professors Theo Majka, Steve Dandeneau, and Sister Laura Leming, Dean organized and led bus tours of Dayton neighborhoods for student, faculty and staff groups.

For the generous, always smiling person he is and the many things he has done, Dean will always be remembered by the Fitz Center.

Jana Strom is also moving on. In 2005, the search for a Semester of Service project coordinator became a crisis when the selected candidate decided to stay in Iowa. The search for another candidate who was available to start immediately led the Fitz Center to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Jana, a friend of a UD campus minister, was between jobs. A telephone interview revealed her extensive service in summer camps, outdoor education, at Nazareth Farm and a hospital and led to a job offer, if she could decide in a day and come to Dayton the next!

Jana responded in a very uncharacteristic manner. Surprising even herself, she accepted the position and came to Dayton to live in a graduate student Garden Apartment and work full-time as a VISTA. This was the first indication of the quality of the person welcomed to the Fitz Center.

Jana quickly adjusted to the rhythm of the Semester of Service schedule and led the orientation of the fall cohort without missing a beat. She has always been a pleasure to work with — always joyful and smiling, organizing everything to the smallest detail, hard working, proactive, leaving nothing to chance and always happy to spend time with friends, past associates, students or fellow staff members, yet still finding time to take courses needed to follow her call to become a physical therapist. She has recently accepted a position to pursue doctoral studies in physical therapy at the Institute of Health Professions of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. 



FITZ CENTER STUDENT INTERNS GRADUATE

by Suzette Pico and Bob Stoughton

The Fitz Center salutes three student interns who graduated in May. They have been a valuable part of the Fitz Center.

Laura Burgess received her Bachelor of Arts in sociology and a minor in social work. Laura fulfilled her student leadership with the Fitz Center as a Bonner Senior Intern and assisted Jana Strom and Brother Ed Zamierowski, S.M., with the Semester of Service Program. Her favorite experience was getting to know the Fitz Center family. Laura moved three days after graduation to Burlington, Vt., where she will pursue a master's in social work.

Laura credits her mother for her success. "My deepest gratitude is to my mother. She is my rock, my soul and my love. Without her I truly would not be the force of nature or the powerful woman I am today. She taught me how to soar, and I am so proud that she is now letting me spread my wings on my own. I know that she will always be beside me, and I will always be her baby daughter. Her love is so strong, and I will continue to feel it wherever I go. My love for her is steadfast and indefinite."

Emily Klein received her Bachelor of Arts in religious studies and a minor in social work, magna cum laude. She started at the Fitz Center her freshman year as part of the team that developed the Rivers Institute. She eventually became the Rivers Institute co-coordinator. Not surprisingly, some of her favorite memories of UD include paddling 17 miles of the Great Miami River on three different occasions with the River Stewards. She loves riding her bike when she's not on the river and spending time with her roommates; she and five other women have been together since their first year at UD. Emily also enjoyed being part of UD's Summer Appalachia Program in Salyersville, Ky.

Emily's devotion to community and service earned her the Maureen O'Rourke Award from the Marianists in her senior year. Her academic excellence led to the Brother Leonard Mann Award to the outstanding graduate in the College of Arts and Sciences. Emily will continue at UD in public administration and will serve as graduate assistant to the executive director of the Fitz Center. Emily feels the Fitz Center experience "has been one of the best gifts during my time at UD."

Alex Orlowski received his Bachelor of Arts in political science and sociology, magna cum laude, and a minor in Marianist social transformation. While his primary role in the Fitz Center has been with the National Issues Forums, Alex has helped with a number of other projects. One of his favorite memories is the trip he took to Honolulu as a participant in a Marianist University Meeting (MUM); he recalls street dancing with Dick Ferguson and Professor Chris Duncan. Alex enjoys playing Mario Kart with his roommates and supporting Flyers basketball, including an extended road trip to watch them in this year's NCAA Tournament.

Alex will attend the University of Illinois College of Law to pursue interests in constitutional law and public interest law and get ready for his wedding in summer 2010 after Katie Hill, his fiancée, graduates. Alex wants to thank everyone at the Fitz Center "for helping to teach him the most important lessons of life."



Above: The Fitz Center salutes three student interns who graduated in May (from left: Emily Klein, Laura Burgess and Alex Orlowski). They have been a valuable part of the Fitz Center.



SWEAT EQUITY — FITZ CENTER STYLE

by Jordan Rowan Fannin

On Saturday, April 25, the Fitz Center organized and led the University of Dayton team in volunteering with Rebuilding Together Dayton's third annual National Rebuilding Day. This year's group worked with the city of Dayton team on the Charles Dannin Memorial Fund house — a special project with connections to Rebuilding Together Dayton, the City and the University.

The Fitz Center/UD team boasted 26 volunteers from many campus departments and organizations, including Leadership UD, enrollment management, UDRI, UDit, dining services, Roesch Library, University advancement and the political science department/public administration program. Additionally, some volunteers brought their spouses or children.

Though the weather was warm, more than 35 workers were able to do concrete work, install drywall, repair and paint trim on the house and garage, do yard work, landscape, and build a ramp for the homeowner, Jim, who uses a wheelchair. Jim is a Navy veteran who has lived in his home for 40 years.

Rebuilding Together Dayton is a local nonprofit that works year-round to provide home rehabilitation and repair to assist low-income Dayton homeowners, particularly the elderly and disabled, so that they may remain in their homes in safety and independence. This year, more than 1,200 volunteers worked on 20 homes and four community centers across the city of Dayton, providing \$300,000 worth of improvements. Rebuilding Together Dayton is housed in UD's Rubicon House.



Above: The Fitz Center/UD team boasted 26 volunteers from many campus departments and organizations.